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Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Dissemination of information on decolonization during the period from April 2014 to March 2015

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 69/106 of 5 December 2014, provides an overview of the activities undertaken by the Department of Public Information to disseminate information on decolonization, with particular emphasis on the options of self-determination available for the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Unless otherwise mentioned, it covers the period from April 2014 to March 2015.

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in paragraph 2 of its resolution 69/106 of 5 December 2014, considered it important to continue and expand its efforts to ensure the widest possible dissemination of information on decolonization, with particular emphasis on the options of self-determination available for the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. To that end, it requested the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, through the United Nations information centres in the relevant regions, to actively engage and seek new and innovative ways to disseminate material to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In paragraph 3 of that resolution, the Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to further enhance the information provided on the United Nations decolonization website and to continue to include the full series of reports of the regional seminars on decolonization, the statements and scholarly papers presented at those seminars and links to the full series of reports on the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. In paragraph 4, the Assembly requested the Department of Public Information to continue its efforts to update web-based information on the assistance programmes available to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In paragraph 5, the Assembly requested the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Public Information to implement the recommendations of the Special Committee on decolonization and to continue their efforts to take measures through all media available, including publications, radio and television, as well as the Internet, to give publicity to the work of the United Nations in the field of decolonization.

2. In fulfilling its mandate, the Department of Public Information worked closely with the Decolonization Unit of the Department of Political Affairs, among other relevant United Nations offices and entities.

3. The present report, prepared in response to that mandate, covers the period from April 2014 to March 2015.

II. 2014 regional seminar on the implementation of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism

4. The Special Committee on decolonization held its 2014 annual regional seminar in Denarau, Fiji, from 21 to 23 May. The seminar was conducted within the framework of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (2011-2020).

5. In coordination with the Decolonization Unit, the Department of Public Information arranged for the deployment of a press officer from the United Nations Information Centre in Canberra to cover the seminar. The officer provided media support and issued daily press releases during the seminar, which were disseminated by the Department.

III. Coverage of issues before the General Assembly

6. During the reporting period, the Department issued a total of 35 press releases on decolonization in English and French, covering meetings, statements and

hearings by various United Nations bodies, including the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee of the Fourth Committee and the Special Committee on decolonization.

7. The Meetings Coverage Section disseminated information about the meetings through media alerts and distributed statements from the meetings through the Media Documents Centre.

8. United Nations activities on issues related to decolonization continued to be highlighted on the multilingual portal of the United Nations News Centre, which is one of the most frequently visited online segments of the United Nations. Decolonization issues were the subject of four stories on the News Centre's English site and one story on the French site. Those stories were also distributed through an e-mail-based news alerts service and RSS (rich site summary) feeds, as well as on social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter.

9. The Media Accreditation and Liaison Unit provided accreditation and escort to media representatives covering the meetings of the Special Committee on decolonization.

United Nations website and social media

10. During the reporting period, the Department continued to maintain and update the website on the United Nations and decolonization in the six official languages (www.un.org/en/decolonization), adding new content on related issues. Attracting a growing number of visitors, the site registered more than 290,000 page views during the period from April 2014 to March 2015. Activities and issues related to decolonization were also highlighted through other special web pages maintained by the Department, such as those on global issues related to decolonization (www.un.org/en/globalissues/decolonization).

11. The Department used its accounts on various social media platforms to raise awareness about decolonization issues and to drive traffic to the decolonization website and other relevant web pages.

United Nations Television and United Nations Photo

12. United Nations Television and United Nations Photo covered all formal open meetings of the Special Committee on decolonization and related press conferences, as well as relevant sessions of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, in addition to the adoption of the Committee's reports in the General Assembly plenary meetings.

13. Coverage of these meetings, as well as other events related to decolonization, were also made available live and on demand on the United Nations Web TV website (http://webtv.un.org), where a total of 32 videos on that subject can be accessed.

United Nations Radio and United Nations News Centre

14. During the reporting period, the United Nations Radio units and the United Nations News Centre portal continued to highlight activities of the United Nations on issues related to decolonization and to the Non-Self-Governing Territories, in all six official languages, as well as in Portuguese and Kiswahili on United Nations Radio, and on social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter. The coverage also included the work of the Special Committee on decolonization and the call by the Secretary-General for innovative and practical ways to implement decolonization. Furthermore, United Nations News Centre stories on decolonization were picked up by an array of external websites around the world, including media outlets, news aggregators and educational and non-governmental organizations.

IV. Visitors' Services

15. The topic of decolonization, including the roles of the Trusteeship Council and the Special Committee on decolonization, was regularly included in the narrative of the guided tours of United Nations Headquarters in New York provided by the Department. Information provided by the tour guides in the Trusteeship Council chamber focused on explaining to visitors the historical process of decolonization and recent developments.

16. The work of the United Nations in the area of decolonization was also a regular feature of the guided tour and briefing programmes of the Visitors' Services at the United Nations Offices at Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna, primarily in the context of an overview of the history, main activities and achievements of the Organization. In 2014, the guided tour programme of the Palais des Nations in Geneva addressed the role of the Trusteeship Council in the decolonization process, reaching 108,000 visitors. Similarly, 3,528 visitors took a guided tour of the United Nations Office at Nairobi in 2014 and listened to briefings and lectures on the topic of decolonization. A total of 55,568 visitors took a guided tour of the United Nations Office at Vienna in 2014.

V. Dag Hammarskjöld Library

17. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library provides research and information services on decolonization and related issues on an ongoing basis. During the reporting period, the Library handled a series of requests for research and information services on this topic. Requests were received from States Members of the United Nations that were doing research on the history of their decolonization, independence and participation within the framework of the United Nations. Requests were also received from staff members, researchers and scholars, who wished to make effective use of the rich documentary archives of the Organization, including landmark speeches, treaties, maps, Trusteeship Council reports and other relevant information sources.

18. Through its retrospective digitization programme, the Library continued to upload important United Nations documents on decolonization on the Official Documents System of the Organization in order to make an increasing number of documents accessible through the Internet, while ensuring the preservation of the

original versions. In 2014, the focus was on reports of the Fourth Committee from the early 1950s.

VI. United Nations publications

19. During the reporting period, the Department published volume 64 (2010) of the *Yearbook of the United Nations* and continued to work on volume 65 (2011). With its comprehensive coverage of the annual activities of the United Nations, including those related to decolonization, the *Yearbook* presents the work of the General Assembly, the Fourth Committee and the Special Committee on decolonization, as well as general decolonization issues and the support provided by the Economic and Social Council to Non-Self-Governing Territories. The United Nations Yearbook Twitter account regularly features historical items related to decolonization.

20. The latest (2014) edition of the United Nations primer *Basic Facts about the United Nations* appeared in Arabic and Portuguese during the reporting period. The book documents the contributions of the United Nations to decolonization up to the present day.

21. In addition, as specifically requested in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 69/106, the Department of Public Information has continued to update the leaflet *What the United Nations Can Do to Assist Non-Self-Governing Territories*, which includes a brief description of the activities of various United Nations entities and bodies in support of the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories. A revised edition of the leaflet has been scheduled for release in the second quarter of 2015.

VII. United Nations information centres and services

22. The United Nations Information Service in Vienna provided a compilation of materials designed as guidance for educators to teach students about the work of the United Nations, including the role of the Trusteeship Council.

23. The United Nations Information Centre in Canberra provided media support to the 2014 Pacific regional seminar of the Special Committee on decolonization. The Information Centre covered the daily meetings of the seminar, writing and disseminating press releases.

VIII. Conclusions

24. The Department of Public Information, working in close collaboration with the Department of Political Affairs, continues to disseminate information about decolonization, using both traditional and new media. It highlights the need for immediate and full implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples of 1960. The work of the Special Committee on decolonization, which is the intergovernmental body devoted to advancing the United Nations decolonization agenda, remains at the centre of the Department's outreach activities with media, civil society and educational institutions.